

What are the Information Needs of Communities & Citizens? Typical news coverage plus a somewhat customized view for mobile news regarding 'the longest commute' in Georgia (Not as big a deal since unemployment is higher here than in the state and nation.) Obviously as a news provider

How is Commercial Media Serving Your Community?

It is actually doing a relatively okay job. I know as a proprietor of a hyperlocal news/social networking web site that encourages (even depends) on letting folks air issues, that we have more than most. I think the most important aspect of commercial media is that acknowledges that commerce is a big part of our community. The problem with public or non-commercial media is that it fails to support commercial and entrepreneurial enterprise. When you think about the amount of time folks spend pursuing work, which is dominated by private enterprise, it is silly to draw a line between the two. I should add that as a host of a local forum, there are conflicts particularly when businesses are not doing 'good' business but that is where open forums tend to provide the consumer a voice otherwise lacking in traditional commercial media.

What is the State of Noncommercial, Nonprofit, and Public Media?

Basically there is NPR in the non-profit arena. Private community media, which includes my site, does feature competition from government TV which is directed to provide a 'hunky dory' view of the community (more sugary - high calorie non-nutritional information that is dedicated to avoidance of controversy. Because the political interests and institutional businesses (banks/hospitals/county) control that media, they direct the resources to restrict access to the media much more than do commercial media.

What is the Impact of the Internet and Mobile Information?

There are limited mobile services in the community. The county, city, schools and chamber all have web sites that are essentially static in nature. While things like meeting agendas are available online, the very structure of the local government - its heritage was a sole commissioner who made up the laws as he went - tends toward autocratic government. Again, these entities seek to do more than control the news, they seek to define the debate by limiting or marginalizing the voices to pablum.

We do have high-speed Internet available in the most populous areas of the county. (West Paulding is limited to dialup, satellite or 3G at best.)

My site, paulding.com, is a factor. We've stopped, for instance, a 'stealth \$125,000,000 bond issue' by our social networking/hyperlocal news site. Our site plays a big role in the public vetting of candidates.

Because we're not beholden or under the thumb of the community's elites, we are 'not liked' by that local power elite, not because we're always after them, but more simply because they cannot control

us. That has been beneficial to my commercial enterprise because I encourage new voices and folks have come to depend on the site for news.

However, we're relatively new on the scene while the power elite, has been pulling the local strings since before 1980 when the county's population was 25,000. Today, with close to 150,000 residents, the same local power elite remain in control of the political and economic life of the community and the world can see their success in this builder dominated bedroom community's tax digest. Yes, 83 percent of the value of the tax digest is residential in this bedroom community where the emphasis was not on jobs but on land development. The understanding was that people, home after a two-hour commute, aren't likely to even know where the courthouse is, much less seek much influence.

The paltry 17 percent commercial/industrial section includes mainly big box stores whose local management rarely influences (or even lives in) the community and a service industry owned mostly by the families from the elite.

Indeed, if the public/government sector were to be encouraged by grants or other incentives to expand their role as the media providers for the community, the result would be to do their best to run the private, independent media out of town.

Do know that any effort to ingrain the values of the fourth estate and entertain and encourage a watchdog role in media controlled by the local political institutions (county/city government/ public schools and major institutions) will be a failure. The culture of those organizations - and I'm not talking about Paulding county here but in all the places I've been a writer/reporter/editor - are simply incompatible with providing relevant information for the public.

They'd rather cover up the embezzlement of the money raised for band uniforms than prosecute since the one doing the embezzlement was a second cousin to half the power elite.